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CALIFORNIA HORSE RACING BOARD



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CHRB NEWS RELEASE

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SUMMARY OF CHRB ACTIONS AND DISCUSSIONS 12-15-21

The California Horse Racing Board conducted a meeting by teleconference on Wednesday, December 15. The public participated by dialing into the teleconference and/or listening through the audio webcast link on the CHRB website. Chairman Gregory Ferraro chaired the meeting, joined by Vice Chair Oscar Gonzales and Commissioners Dennis Alfieri, Damascus Castellanos, Brenda Washington Davis, Wendy Mitchell, and Alex Solis.

The audio of this entire Board meeting is available on the CHRB Website (www.chrb.ca.gov) under the Webcast link. In brief:

- The Board narrowly approved the requested six-month license for the Pacific Racing Association to operate a thoroughbred race meet at Golden Gate Fields (GGF) with racing beginning December 26, 2021, and concluding June 12, 2022. Equine fatalities have remained relatively the same as the last calendar year at GGF. However, four fatalities have occurred since November 14. Consequently, three members of the Board – Vice Chair Gonzales and Commissioners Washington Davis and Mitchell – preferred a shorter three-month license, during which time the CHRB could evaluate GGF's performance before considering an extension of the license for the balance of the scheduled meet. A four-member majority of the Board – Chairman Ferraro and Commissioners Alfieri, Castellanos, and Solis – preferred granting the full six-month license subject to increased monitoring throughout the license period. Commissioner Alfieri noted that the Board always has the option to halt racing at any racetrack if the situation warrants it. The final vote was 4-3 to approve the full license with Vice Chair Gonzales and Commissioners Washington Davis and Mitchell as no votes. Meanwhile, Dr. Ferraro and CHRB executives have been visiting GGF and conferring with management and horsemen about the rate of equine fatalities in an effort to implement additional preventive measures.
- In his monthly report, CHRB Executive Director Scott Chaney advised, "Our new intra-articular injection regulation went into effect on October 1, and two new regulations will become effective on January 1. (Those are) the strict regulation of thyroxine and requirement that horses undergo a veterinary soundness examination

within 72 hours of workouts and/or entry to races. These regulations will promote (animal welfare) with the goal of further driving down the incidence of catastrophic injuries.” Chaney also reported on developments related to the Horse Racing Safety and Integrity Act, which will lead to federal oversight of horse racing. He said the CHRB will continue to point out that California already has rules, programs, and procedures that should not be weakened in any way and should perhaps serve as models for HISA regulation.

- Dr. Jeff Blea, equine medical director, reported briefly on sudden deaths and necropsies, prompted by the death of Medina Spirit, an otherwise healthy horse that collapsed and died during a workout with no observable musculoskeletal injury. Dr. Blea said sudden deaths also occur among humans and horses in other performance events outside of racing. He reaffirmed that a thorough and comprehensive necropsy is underway in accordance with CHRB rules and procedures. Such postmortem examinations are performed by pathologists at California Animal Health and Food Safety laboratories under the direction of the School of Veterinary Medicine at the University of California, Davis (UC Davis). Samples and specimens are being shared with other programs at UC Davis, including Toxicology, Analytical Chemistry, and Genetics, as well as other universities in the country to help determine the precise cause of death. However, he cautioned that a definitive cause of death is determined in only about half of sudden deaths. He said a necropsy of a sudden death can take weeks or months to complete due to the in-depth level of analysis involved, and in the case of Medina Spirit, he expects a final report in about two months. Meanwhile, samples and specimens in this case will be refrigerated and stored for possible future analysis should the need arise. He provided a link to a highly respected study of sudden deaths:

<https://beva.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/j.2042-3306.2010.00164.x?src=getfr>

- The Board approved the license for the Los Angeles Turf Club to operate a thoroughbred race meet at Santa Anita (SA) with racing beginning December 26, 2021, and concluding June 12, 2022, June 19. The Board requires SA to take at least one week off during that period, so SA will go dark from April 22 through April 29, along with an optional “flex week,” depending on weather and other circumstances that might prompt a cessation of racing.
- In conjunction with those meets at SA and GGF, the Board approved agreements between those two tracks and the Thoroughbred Owners of California authorizing those racing secretaries to establish conditions on races limiting the administrations of certain medications and certain procedures. Those agreements will cover the entire 2022 racing year for those two tracks.

- The Board approved two separate requests from racetracks and horsemen regarding the distribution of their own market access fees from Advance Deposit Wagering for stabling and simulcast operations.
- Public comments made during the meeting can be accessed through the meeting audio archive on the CHRB website.

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Below are images with links from California All, the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, and the California Department of Public Health, which will serve you with updates on Coronavirus (COVID-19).

